



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Voyageurs National Park

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Voyageurs National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON PRESCRIBED BURN PROPOSED IN VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

Voyageurs National Park proposes to conduct several prescribed burns on islands this summer in an effort to restore the pine forests in these areas. Fire is a natural process and trees such as red, white and jack pine depend on fire to regenerate. Prescribed fire is being used elsewhere in Voyageurs to maintain and regenerate pine stands and to consume dead and downed trees that pose an excessive fire hazard. The proposed burns include six islands on Namakan Lake between Mica Bay and Johnson Bay (Strawberry Island Complex): Mica Island, Gagnon Island, Strawberry Island, Alden Island, and two unnamed islands.

In addition to restoration, these burns would also be used in a study to better understand the effects of fire (prescribed and wildfire) on archeological resources. Experimental plots would be set up with replica artifacts or modern representations of historic materials such as ceramics, bottle glass, metal cans, etc. The plots would then be burned as a part of the prescribed fire and the results analyzed. This study would help the park determine protection priorities for cultural resources in Voyageurs. For more information about the fire effects research program go to www.cr.nps.gov/mwac/jfsp/index.htm.

Park staff welcomes public input on the proposed prescribed burning of the Strawberry Island Complex. Questions and/or comments should be submitted in writing to Fire Management Officer, Voyageurs National Park, 3131 Highway 53, International Falls, MN 56649. The park will accept comments from April 6, 2007 to May 6, 2007.

Other prescribed burns are planned in the park for late spring or early summer including previously burned areas at Tar Point, east of Kohler Bay, and Meander Corner and Mica Bay, both located north of Mica Island. The locations and timing of prescribed burns are carefully planned by park managers to ensure visitor safety, protection of private lands and structures, and confinement within the park boundary. Burns are conducted only if temperature, wind speed, relative humidity, precipitation, and other factors are within prescribed guidelines. The predetermined weather conditions are to ensure that the burns will be of low intensity and meet management objectives to encourage pine regeneration, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce hazardous fuels. For more information about prescribed fires go to www.nps.gov/fire/public/pub_und_prescribedfire.cfm.

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